

with some fear and trembling, volunteered. It is an office for which there is never any violent competition, and her services were thankfully accepted. She had now held the place for two years, and had gained considerable experience in various directions. The day after Mrs. Hampden had been so exercised about her five cents, Miss Dawson was running over list preparatory to going her round of calls.

"Hall, Hartley, Hampden," she checked them off, one by one. "Father said Mrs. Hall had just had fifty thousand dollars left her by an uncle. Probably she will feel like doing a little more this year. Miss Hartley will do all she can. Old Mrs. Hampden—I really am ashamed to go to her when she is so poor. She needs every cent she has, poor old lady, and she won't like to refuse. I don't think I'll ask her. And then there are those Ives, mother and daughter. Nobody has asked them to join since they came to the church. Aunt wanted me to call on them, but I know they have a very small income, and Miss Ives sews for the tailors. I don't think they'll feel like giving, and perhaps will be mortified to refuse," and with these reflections Miss Dawson began her rounds.

She was still young, and had not that experience of life which teaches us that it is a safe general rule to expect the unexpected; therefore, when the lady who had received the fifty thousand dollar legacy talked of increased demands on her income, the many claims she had to answer, and reduced her three dollar subscription by one-half, Miss Dawson was surprised. She went away from Mrs. Hall's, thinking that if Mrs. Hall felt so very poor—Mrs. Hampden would feel much poorer, and had the one woman been a duplicate of the other her reasoning would have been good.

"I really don't think I ought to ask her," she said to herself, and she passed the old tavern without going in, but as she returned up the street from going to Miss Hartley's and not going to Mrs. Ives', she met Mrs. Hampden just at the door of her own home.

"I suppose you are coming to see me," said the old lady with her usual pleasant smile; "I am very sorry I can do so little for you this time, but do what I could I haven't been able to save up but five cents in the old tea-cup. Come in and I'll give it to you."

"Oh, never mind, Mrs. Hampden," said Miss Dawson, perhaps a little influenced by the thought that it was hardly worth while to go up stairs for five cents; we all know your will is good and you had better keep your five cents, I dare say you can find a use for it," and she passed on rather hurriedly, for she was tired and anxious to be at home. She was not quite satisfied with herself as she went on, and yet her intentions had been kind.

She would have been still less satisfied had she known Mrs. Hampden's feelings. She was an old woman and could not bear trouble as quietly as she had once done; and now, as she climbed the stairs to her room, the tears streamed down her face. "I've worked and prayed and given all I could for years," she said as she sat down all alone. "She might have taken it!"

That evening Miss Dawson went to her aunt, Mrs. Dillon, with her list and her collection, and as they were talking over the work, Mrs. Dalton remarked, "I don't see Mrs. Hampden's subscription."

Miss Dawson told her story, and as she told it she felt less and less sure that she had done wisely. Mrs. Dillon, knowing Mrs. Hampden as well as she did, was troubled. "I wish you had taken her five cents," she said; "I am afraid the dear old lady will be hurt."

"Now, I am going to tell you a story, Ma. Do you remember when we bought the new carpet and cushions for the church, who it was that made the collections?"

"Yes, Mrs. Emmons."

"Well, my dear, Mrs. Emmons was not going to call on you to help about the carpet. She said: 'Oh, poor girl! She'll think she must give a dollar or so, and her father's salary is only a couple of thousand. Don't ask her. She needs all she has for herself.'"

The color flew to Miss Dawson's face. "Well! I must say —!" she began indignantly, and stopped short.

Mrs. Dillon said nothing.

"But surely, aunt, is that quite a parallel case?"

"Do a sum in subtraction, Ella. Is there more difference between your income and Mrs. Hampden's than between yours and Mrs. Emmons'?"

"Well!" said Miss Dawson, after a few minutes' silence, "every year I live I think I have learned a little something about how to do the Lord's work, and then I always find out that there was something that anyone might have known that I have never seen. Of course anyone would hate to be left out because she was poor. I shall go to Mrs. Hampden the first thing in the morning," said Miss Dawson, decidedly; "and what is more, I shall try to go to every woman in the congregation and ask her if she wants to come to the Society. If they don't want to subscribe they can say 'no,' and perhaps," she added, with a smile, "those who don't wish to give will enjoy saying 'no,' just as I used to, but I will give them a chance to say 'yes.'"

The next morning, as Mrs. Hampden was washing up her breakfast dishes Miss Dawson came in.

"Dear Mrs. Hampden," she said, "I have come for that five cents, and your forgiveness along with it."

"Oh, my dear," said the old lady, greatly moved, "I have nothing to forgive. I know, when I came to think it over, you meant it for kindness, but it did seem for a little while as if you despised my little gift."

"No, I didn't despise it," said Miss Dawson, "but I thought—in short, I made a great mistake. I think it takes me longer than anyone else to see what the Lord means. I am very stupid."

"That you are not," said the old lady, warmly. "But I do think it is better when one is doing the Lord's work, never to think whether folks are rich or poor, but just think of them as folks, and give everyone a chance to help. They can always say 'no,' if they please."

"I am going to do that way after this," said Miss Dawson.

"You see," said Mrs. Hampden, "the poorer you are the less you like to be made to feel it. Now, there's a lady in our church, she's well off besides me, though she and her daughter work for their living. You've never been to ask her name, and she says the Missionary Society is a kind of genteel ladies' club, and they only want the rich people. I told her that was all nonsense. Says I, 'If you want give, why don't you do it?' I'm not rich certainly, and ain't I a regular member?" Well, she'd made up her mind to come to the meetings—I may as well tell you its Mrs. Ives—only yesterday, just as I met you, she happened to be coming out of the store below, and heard what you said, and last night she came in and said that I might see now that what said was true, and that they didn't want anyone who was poor or worked for their living."

"That was kind of her," said Miss Dawson, dryly.

"Well, she did me good, for she made me see you meant nothing but kindness. I like your idea of going to everyone, and I hope you'll tell me how it turns out. There is my five cents, and if it ain't much may be the Lord will find a use for it."

Miss Dawson went her way, and that same day began her rounds on the principle suggested by Mrs. Hampden, and commenced by soothing the ruffled feelings of Mrs. Ives, and received from her and her daughter an annual subscription of four dollars. The great majority were pleased to have her call. Several promised to come to the meetings, and she found half a dozen new subscribers for the magazines.

When she had finished her work, and the list of new subscriptions was summed up, she found that to the income of the Ladies' Society had been added the sum of sixty dollars. As she had promised, she went to tell Mrs. Hampden of the result.

"Well, my dear," said the old lady, "you've got the perseverance of the saints, anyway. I am sure it was a blessed day for us when you joined our band."

"Then, too," said Miss Dawson, "there are two girls in our Sunday-school that took the Magazine between them, and they, all of themselves, have started a Mission Band."